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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT NO.

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY USSR (Latvia)

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SUBJECT Partisan Movement in the Kurzeme Area

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(LISTED BELOW)SUPPLEMENT TO
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1. Local partisan activity in the Kurzeme area of western Latvia is controlled by a partisan staff. For purposes of control, the area is divided into several "fighting districts", each of which has a district commander. These district commanders form the partisan staff, and each district commander is in charge of several partisan units.
2. Each partisan unit has a unit commander and several "liaisons". The unit commanders are usually ex-servicemen, most of them former officers. The units usually consist of any number of men up to 15, and are armed with tactical weapons such as carbines, machine-carbines, and German Schmeisser and Sturmgewehr. Generally speaking, the weapons are good, but the ammunition is from old stocks and often faulty.
3. The district commander does not live with any of the partisan units subordinate to him and is not even informed, as a rule, of the precise location of their hide-outs. The rank and file members of the partisan units never see him and do not know his identity or where he lives. The district commander and the unit commander have meetings at pre-arranged places. The district commander indicates to each unit its district of activity and issues orders or directions as required. The units do not have precisely delimited districts or areas of activity; they co-operate among themselves if they find themselves located in the same area. The exact location of the unit hide-out is known to no one except the actual members of the unit itself.
4. The "liaisons", of which each partisan unit has several, are persons residing legally in various districts, whose task is to keep the unit supplied with the necessities of life. The "liaisons" have their own special supporters; but in the country, since the collectivization of the farms, they are often very poor. In consequence, the units have to carry out active operations to procure funds. The money obtained by such means is handed to the "liaisons", who purchase supplies and food for the unit. Operations of this kind are carried out at the direction of the district commander and consist of holding up trucks of the co-operative (general store) cashiers

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who are carrying money. Violence is generally restricted to disarming and trussing the victims in order to enable the raiders to get away. After such an operation, the partisans lie low in their dug-outs, for reasons of security. The dug-outs are in the forest or in marsh-land, in places very difficult of access. The usual reaction of the local authorities to such operations is to subject all the farms in the area to a search, but it has sometimes happened that the victims themselves have been arrested, presumably on the charge of faking the hold-up.

5. Other partisan groups or units are in existence, working independently and entirely on their own. They are not under the supervision of the district commanders of the organized partisans. These groups or units lack central direction and are known to have suffered heavy casualties when carrying out any operational activity.

25X1A [REDACTED] Comment: While it is presumed that partisan bands exist in other parts of Latvia, there is no evidence that the system described in this report applies to the whole of Latvia.

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